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INR WEEKLY HIGHLIGHTS  
OF DEVELOPMENTS IN HUMAN RIGHTS\*

No. 4, May 9, 1977

LATIN AMERICA

Argentina

Embassy Buenos Aires has presented its evaluation of the Amnesty International report on Argentina:

- "Setting aside argument over Amnesty itself and its selective policy of attack on human rights violations of governments alone, we cannot take issue with general conclusions or recommendations of report."
- "Report taken alone does not, and does not pretend to, provide full understanding of the situation in Argentina."
- Amnesty's term "political prisoners" includes "terrorist suspects, . . . hard-core terrorists, others considered by the government as guilty or suspected of other crimes, and an unknown number of innocents."
- Amnesty fails to acknowledge several efforts, albeit unsuccessful, by certain federal judges to inject elements of due process into government procedures.
- In considering detention conditions, Amnesty based its report primarily on testimony given by victims, which "automatically raises question of reliability." (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~; Buenos Aires 3364)

Argentine's Roman Catholic bishops, after a week-long meeting of the Episcopal Council, issued on May 7 a statement expressing their concern at the frequent kidnappings, disappearances, and claims of torture and lengthy detention of political prisoners. (UNCLASSIFIED; Reuter R 28)

\* This round-up covers countries receiving development or security assistance or likely to make FMS cash purchases.

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Brazil

An editorial in Diario de Sao Paulo of May 2 declared that it was "unfair" to presuppose that the majority of Latin American countries do not respect the principles established in the Universal Charter of Human Rights.

"Brazil, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, and Paraguay are civilized, cultured countries, and will not tolerate being taught elementary duties in dealing with their citizens." (UNCLASSIFIED; USIS/Brasilia 022035Z May)

Chile

Cardinal Silva told departing Ambassador Popper on May 5 that gross violations of the person had virtually ceased in 1977 but that intimidation of the populace and harassment of churchmen continued. (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~; Santiago 3779)

Honduras

Ambassador Becker, commenting on recent developments in human rights, reported on May 4:

- The government permitted large labor and student demonstrations to take place peacefully in several cities on May 1.
- The National Advisory Council held three days of public hearings on the new electoral law to discuss public financing of the 1979 electoral campaign.
- Editorial comments on the Ambassador's recent statements on human rights in Honduras have been favorable. (~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~; Tegucigalpa 2023)

Nicaragua

Embassy Managua reports that a government-supported newspaper that had previously criticized US human rights policy, headlined the Secretary's April 30 speech

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as a "realistic definition" of human rights policy. Two days later, an editorial characterized the speech as "a model of maturity and political realism, . . . neither interventionistic nor aggressive nor hasty." (UNCLASSIFIED; Managua 2043)

#### Paraguay

Presidential Secretary Pappalardo informed Ambassador Landau on May 5 that government permission would be granted for the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to visit Paraguay. However, so as not to appear to bow to pressure, the permission would be announced after the May 10 meeting on four loans pending from IBRD and IDB. (~~CONFIDENTIAL/LIMDIS~~; Asuncion 1846)

### AFRICA

#### Ivory Coast

When Ambassador Stearns presented a copy of the Secretary's human rights speech to Director of Cabinet Nouama, Noama said the Ivory Coast shares our concern for human rights, "as shown by its own record." (~~CONFIDENTIAL/EXDIS~~; Abidjan 4584)

#### Malawi

Embassy Lilongwe reported, May 3, that it had learned from one of its sources that by the end of May virtually all of the imprisoned Jehovah's Witnesses will have been released, after having served their sentences. (~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~; Lilongwe 668)

#### Sudan

The Minister of State for Foreign Affairs told Ambassador Brewer, May 2, upon being given a copy of the Secretary's speech on human rights, that Sudan fully understands and shares our objectives in the human rights field. (~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~; Khartoum 1501)

#### Tunisia

The Minister of Interior announced on May 3 that the government will approve the "Tunisian Association

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for the Defense of the Rights of Man." He reportedly also said that Tunisia must have a free press so that journalists can "analyze and comment on political and economic subjects without any restraint."

The Embassy commented:

- The Minister is the only senior Tunisian official to take "such a public stand on these issues."
- He apparently acted to head off criticism from the organizers of a conference on public liberties planned for early June.
- He may have been trying to present himself as a moderate alternative to the more conservative government. (~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~; Tunis 3109)

#### Zaire

Four Zairian journalists, who spoke with an Embassy Kinshasa officer on May 4 about the Secretary's human rights speech, "warmly applauded" the US resolve to make advancement of human rights a central point of US foreign policy. They did not think that it was likely to change Mobutu's "style of governing," but they felt that our message will meet a receptive audience in Zaire. (~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~; Kinshasa 4284)

#### EAST ASIA

##### Philippines

The Executive Secretary of the Catholic Bishops' National Secretariat of Social Action showed an Embassy Manila officer on May 7 a letter alleging that Mrs. Trinidad Herrera, the President of the Zone One Tondo Organization, had been tortured while under detention. The Embassy notes that it is unable to judge the accuracy of the report but comments that it is difficult to imagine that the government would torture someone with as much international exposure as Mrs. Herrera, who has met in the past with World Bank representatives and Congressman Fraser. (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~; Manila 6931)

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Philippines Solicitor General Mendoza told Embassy Manila officers on April 12 that a number of human rights groups whose investigations he had facilitated, including Amnesty International and the International Commission of Jurists, had afterwards treated the Philippines unfairly in their reports. Defending the rights situation in his country, Mendoza contended that:

- suspension of habeas corpus made no real difference to the average Filipino;
- the government holds no political prisoners, according to his definition of the term;
- there have been instances of torture, but only on the part of overzealous and ill-trained lower-echelon officials; the government has made an honest effort to punish the offenders;
- Marcos was creating a court of military appeals, staffed by civilians, to review cases of alleged maltreatment of prisoners.

The Embassy commented that Mendoza himself seemed unconvinced by much of what he said. (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~; Embassy MemCon)

#### South Korea

Embassy Seoul has reported that the human rights issue was discussed in a joint session of the National Assembly's Foreign Affairs and National Defense Committees on April 29 and 30. An opposition spokesman asked whether it was not in the ROK's interest to improve human rights in order to better relations with the US. The Prime Minister felt that this subject should not be discussed in an open debate and added his "usual caveat" that it is "improper for any country to meddle in another's internal affairs." In a reply to an inquiry regarding the Fraser subcommittee's visit, the Foreign Minister said that:

- it would be impossible for this subcommittee to "do what it pleased in Korea";
- the government would not submit to interrogation; and

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--the government saw no reason for Korean citizens to comply with the subcommittee's requests. (~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~; Seoul 3592)

#### NEAR EAST

##### Egypt

When Ambassador Eilts delivered a copy of the Secretary's human rights speech to Foreign Minister Fahmy on May 5, Fahmy promised to read it carefully because he recognized the US Government's seriousness on the issue.

The Embassy, noting that press coverage of the speech had been light, observed that while most Egyptians have commented favorably upon US human rights policy, they tend to view it primarily in the Arab-Israeli context. They maintain that sooner or later the US is going to have to take a stand on the "violation of Palestinian human rights" resulting from the creation of the State of Israel and the Israeli policy in occupied territories. (~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~; Cairo 7695)

##### Iran

Foreign Minister Khalatbary confirmed on May 3, during a briefing of a visiting US group, that a delegation from the International Red Cross was currently visiting Tehran. He expected its findings to counter "Amnesty International's anti-Iranian propaganda." (~~CONFIDENTIAL~~; Tehran 3943)

##### Jordan

When our Charge delivered a copy of the Secretary's human rights speech to Prime Minister Badran, Badran said that he realized the importance that the US attaches to this subject. (~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~; Amman 2483)

#### WESTERN EUROPE

##### Cyprus

The Secretary's human rights speech was given full coverage in the Greek Cypriot press. The press, taking the line that US "deeds do not follow words about Cyprus," charged that Turkey has been violating human rights in

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Cyprus for 2-1/2 years, and the US continues to provide aid to it. (UNCLASSIFIED; Nicosia 1199)

Germany

An editorial in Die Welt, May 2, declared that the Secretary's human rights speech advanced an explanation of US policy that was "extremely important" and seemed to reflect "a learning process." The paper was pleased that the US now appeared ready to distinguish

"between countries which endeavor to create humane conditions under rough conditions . . . , and regimes which by their very nature are directed toward oppression."

It concluded that "apparently the United States no longer wants to alarm all potential allies in its controversy with the actual enemy." (UNCLASSIFIED; FBIS 100)

Greece

Embassy Athens reported, May 5, that Greece is likely to judge US human rights policy in terms of our performance with regard to Turkey. The Embassy noted that Greece itself has usually taken a pragmatic view of human rights in its bilateral relations, except in the case of relations with Turkey. (~~LIMITED OFFICIAL USE~~; Athens 4174)

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